



(U) SIGINT Seniors Making History - in a Good Way

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(S//SI) SIGINT leaders from 12 nations meet in Amsterdam

(TS//SI) Once described as a "waste of good food" by an NSA senior, current activities of the SIGINT Seniors partnership have consigned that perception to the history books. The National SIGINT Authorities of the twelve nations that make up the SIGINT Seniors (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the US) met in annual conference in Amsterdam from 7-9 June and cemented their forward-leaning trend accelerated over the last few years.

(S//SI) In perhaps the most significant decision since the formation of the SIGINT Seniors Counterterrorism Coalition (SISect) in December of 2001, **the SIGINT Seniors committed their nations to participate in the operational deployment of the CENTER ICE* tactical communications system in Afghanistan** in late 2005.

(S//SI) Following then-DIRNSA/Chairman of SIGINT Seniors General Hayden's commitment to develop such a system at the Seniors 2004 meeting in Oslo, the nations prepared for this decision: the US dedicated the resources for system development (SID funded and FAD's Technical Services Group, DP3, executed) and the SIGINT Seniors Executive Board (SSEB) convened a Special Working Group (led by the US/FAD/DP16) to work out an initial Concept of Operations and deployment plan.

(S//SI) At the Seniors conference, DP3 demonstrated the prototype CENTER ICE system, giving the Seniors a firsthand look at the hub-and-spoke-based system that will connect tactically-deployed SIGINT elements to enable collaboration within the SIGINT coalition. The Seniors were deeply impressed, not only with the US follow-through on its commitment, but also with the implications for revolutionary improvements in multi-national SIGINT tactical collaboration. Nine out of twelve nations committed to participate in the initial, Phase I, deployment of CENTER ICE, with commitments tempered only by national plans to deploy troops to Afghanistan in the near term. Denmark, Sweden, and Belgium all indicated a strong desire to participate, and will likely join the SIGINT coalition once/if their nations deploy troops during Phase I.

[REDACTED]

(U) Amsterdam

(S//SI) Turning to another area of focus for the Seniors, while they were deeply impressed with the progress made by SISect since its inception -- and particularly within the last year -- they were not convinced that the Seniors were doing all they could to foster collaboration both multi-nationally and across SIGINT, HUMINT, and Law Enforcement lines. Realizing the partnership was now dealing with issues relating to the nations' more sensitive sources and methods (sharing of metadata, possible sharing of C2C techniques and data, among others), **the Seniors tasked the CT Deputies to build upon the progress already made at the analytic level** within SISect such that the Seniors can determine where and how they -- at their levels -- can influence their national structures and policies to increase levels of success. The CT Deputies, led by the British Counterterrorism Coordinator, were tasked to document and share their national legal and policy issues in order to better define their operational space, develop a clear set of deliverables for the 2006 Seniors conference, and continue in their advisory role to the SISect analytic exchange.

(S) In one more area of significant activity and building on 2004's successful, first-ever

partnership provision of 24/7 threat warning support to the Athens Summer Games, **the Seniors committed their services to provide threat warning support to two upcoming international events: the 2006 Winter Olympics in Italy and the 2006 FIFA World Cup Games in Germany.** These decisions prompted discussion about the long-term requirement for partnership support to multi-national events and supported policy and procedures agreed to by the SSEB at its May meeting in The Hague. On the horizon looms the Beijing Olympics in 2008, which will be a topic for discussion at next year's SIGINT Seniors meeting.

(U) While the substantive business of the SIGINT Seniors conference was surrounded by gracious hospitality (and good food), this new chapter in the history of the partnership will clearly render the earlier criticism an amusing historical anecdote.

*(C) This article is reprinted from the *Foreign Affairs Digest* July edition. For more information on CENTER ICE, see the July and April editions at the [Digest web page](#).

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